

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU # 11

Dr. Gerald Daley, Superintendent

Dr. Donna Bolian, Special Education Director

Final Report

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Team Members:

Maryclare Heffernan, Chairperson
Janet Balise
Linda Couture
Bing Hawes
Lisa Hevey
Steve Lord
Christina Nancarrow
Steve Schuster
Pam Texeira
Martha Wingate
Janina Wojtkin

New Hampshire Special Education

Program Approval Report

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(Commendations, Citations, and Suggestions for each school)

Note: It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU # 11

I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU # 11 comprised of the following schools: Garrison Elementary, Horne Street Elementary, the Pre-School Program, Woodman Park Elementary, Dover Middle School and Dover High School. The visiting team met on November 12 and 13, 1997 in order to review the status of Special Education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data, and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the special education director, building principals, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel and administrators as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via phone. Throughout the visit the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the N.H. State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: *Conducted on March 3 & 4, 1993*

Based on review of the previous program approval report and the findings of the team that visited all schools within the Dover School District in November 1997, the visiting team found that the district has made gains by increasing the number of staff positions, developing inclusionary opportunities that reflect a continuum of services, and creating a highly successful collaborative relationship between the regular and special education systems. There are some district-wide issues that remain similar to those seen during the previous on-site visitation. There are inconsistencies in the paperwork and procedures that, again, appear to be for the most part, oversights as opposed to a pattern. It was also noted that the length of time it is taking to complete some student evaluations is often more than 45 days; this appears to be a result of the availability of staff to complete assessments in a timely manner. The issue of staff responsibilities for programming and clerical work remains the same even with the addition of several new staff positions. The addition of two behavior specialists at the elementary schools has been a help, perhaps more in the area of preventative support than in any other area. Of concern to the visiting team was the physical condition of the Middle School. The previous team indicated the crowded conditions at the school might impact the quality of programming available to students. Since the last visit no significant renovations have been made, however, the district is in the process of considering options available to them. Overall, the visiting team found that the status of programming within SAU 11 since the previous on-site, reflects ongoing collaboration and thoughtful work toward the development of the most appropriate educational programming for all students.

The visiting team was very favorably impressed with the successful collaboration between special and regular education staff. The consensus was that this relationship provides all staff with the ability to create new solutions toward the development of the most effective educational programming for the district's students. This theme of cooperation was observed throughout the district and indicates a highly developed level of professionalism.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

A review of a random sample of special education records revealed that there are several issues that the district should address. The length of time it takes to complete a student evaluation is, in several cases, longer than 45 days, indicating that the district may need to consider the availability of staff to conduct evaluations in a more timely manner. Another staffing issue is that the Occupational Therapist must provide services to approximately 55 students in 13 different settings. The logistics of managing such a schedule is daunting and the district may want to consider providing support to this position to ensure appropriate services to disabled students.

SAU #11 has identified individual case managers as the LEA representative at student meetings. This is an effective way to provide building level staff with the ability to empower the team to make program decisions for students and has had a positive effect in exactly that way. Staff feel closer to the decisions and are using this opportunity to work very successfully with colleagues in each building. A review of the student records, however, doesn't always include evidence of who is assuming LEA responsibility. Signatures should clearly reflect the responsibility of LEA representative in each case.

There were several paperwork omissions that appear to be only occasional errors. However, the district is encouraged to work toward more consistency in these areas. Please see individual school's compliance report for specific citations.

As noted in the past, there continues to be significant concern regarding the physical condition of the Middle School. The aging building is presently inadequate in its ability to provide appropriate learning spaces for the educationally disabled students. The district is presently exploring options to address this building need.

IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: SAU WIDE

Name of Program(s) Visited: All

COMMENDATIONS:

There is a district wide commitment to inclusion and clear evidence that regular and special education staff work together to insure successful programming for all students in this SAU. Communication is clearly established and is used effectively to create educational programs and solutions for all students.

There is a high degree of professionalism evident in the work done by all special education staff. The ongoing development of new ideas and best practices as they relate to the special education students is impressive.

The parents interviewed all indicated strong satisfaction with the educational programming their child is receiving. They felt that communication was particularly good.

The special education records are well organized and in order.

The district's interest in developing comprehensive and effective reading programs is to be commended. The staff development work in this area is excellent.

The Superintendent of Schools and the Special Education Director provide broad leadership and consistency throughout the SAU.

The building level administration is supportive of special education programs and procedures.

IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: SAU WIDE (Con't.)

SUGGESTIONS:

The district is encouraged to consider all possible options for the improvement of the physical space at the Middle School.

The district is encouraged to consider any additional staffing needs to meet district wide assessment or related services requirements.

Program(s) Visited: Woodman Park Preschool

COMMENDATIONS:

- Communication among staff at the preschool is excellent. Weekly consultations are beneficial to all. There is a true collaborative effort by all team members.
- All preschool referrals received are given immediate attention and students are provided with evaluations.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1115.01 1 file: did not contain evidence to show student is educated with non-disabled peers.

Ed# 1115.07(c) 1 file: :no evidence that non-academic and extra curricular services are provided for students to participate with non-disabled peers.

Ed# 1115.04(b) 1 file: alternative education environments not considered.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Provide opportunities for disabled students who are enrolled at Woodman Park Elementary School Preschool Program to interact with non-disable peers.
- Reverse mainstreaming: allow non-disabled peers to enroll into preschool program.

Program(s) Visited: Kindergarten

COMMENDATIONS:

- Having three teachers and one full time aide allows for well developed individual, small group and whole class lessons.
- Team teaching appears to be well developed and effective.
- There is adequate space to provide services.
- Weekly consultations are impressive and effective in allowing consistency in planning, programming and student assistance.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1107.07(c,3) 1 file: LEA representative not consistently identified.

Ed# 1107.02(b) 1 file: did not contain evidence of written notice to parents upon receipt of referral.

Ed# 1107.02(d) 1 file: did not contain evidence of written notice of disposition of referral to parents.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The total size of the community-based kindergarten is large. School staff are encouraged to monitor size of the community based programs to assure the most effective size instructional groupings for students with educational disabilities.

Program(s) Visited: 1) Self-Contained 2) Resource Room 3) Out-of-District File

COMMENDATIONS:

- There is a high degree of cooperation between regular and special education staff.
- Staff go "above & beyond" to provide care and support to students, adapting to the students needs on a daily basis.
- Woodman Park School staff feel supported by each other.
- The school is cheerful and well lit, a pleasant teaching environment.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1107.02(d)	1 file did not contain evidence of written notice to parents of the disposition of the referral.
Ed# 1107.05.(k)	2 files: evaluations not completed within 45 days. Evaluation summary report not in file.
Ed# 1107.07(c)	2 files: did not contain evidence of LEA listed by signatures.
Ed# 1109.01(b)	2 files: short term instructional objectives not contained in IEP.
Ed# 1109.01(i)	1 file: objective criteria and evaluation procedures or schedules for determining whether the short-term instructional objectives are being achieved was not in IEP.
Ed# 1109.03	1 file: regular education teacher's signature not on IEP.
Ed# 1111.01	1 file: did not contain evidence of consideration of ESY.
Ed# 1123.04	Record of access sheets were not in some files.

SUGGESTIONS:

- It is strongly suggested that all special education files be housed in a locked and secure cabinet to assure confidentiality.
- Review evaluation procedures to establish the most efficient process available to complete evaluations within 45 days.

Program(s) Visited: 1) Resource Room 2) Primary 3) Alternative I 4) Modified

Regular

COMMENDATIONS:

- Regular education teachers are supportive and complimentary of special education teachers' quality of support and collaboration. Special education staff are involved in regular education committees and are part of the whole school.
- Special education staff are very flexible in addressing the needs of the students. Regular education teachers offer an inclusionary setting for all students.
- "Responsive classroom" meetings are supportive of all students.
- Special education staff has good communication with parents.
- Administration is very supportive of the special education staff and programs.

CITATIONS:

- Ed# 1107.02(b) 1 file did not contain evidence of notification in writing to parents of receipt referral.
- Ed# 1107.08(c) 1 file did not contain evidence of an observation as part of the evaluation process.
- Ed# 1119.06(d) O.T. space was not of sufficient size to accommodate equipment necessary to implement the student's IEP.

SUGGESTIONS: None

HORNE STREET SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited:

1) Resource Room

2) Modified Regular

COMMENDATIONS:

- All staff work well together and cooperatively support the students. They display a highly effective collaborative effort that results in a real team effort for students.
- One on one and small group work is effective in serving student's needs.
- Files were well maintained, organized and complete.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1107.05 1 file: LEA representative was LD certified, but did not identify as such.

Ed# 1107.07 1 file: LEA representative signature not noted.

Ed# 1115.03 1 file: purpose of meeting not indicated. Placement team not listed separately from IEP team.

Ed# 1125.04 1 file: placement did not contain parent or LEA representative signatures.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Have all meeting attendees sign all areas of certification and team roles for clarity.

Program(s) Visited: 1) Resource Room 2) Self-Contained 3) Modified Mainstream

COMMENDATIONS:

- Files are well maintained, current and well organized.
- School staff were friendly and very flexible in assisting team members.
- Special and regular education staff placed emphasis on working cooperatively.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1109.11 1 file did not show evidence of regular and systematic monitoring of IEP.

Ed# 1109.06 The facilities at Dover Middle School are not adequate to address the needs of educationally disabled students. Physical classroom space is a concern and is not adequate to implement student's IEP and provide for all other learning activities.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The Dover Middle School is in significant need of renovation or replacement in order to appropriately accommodate all students educational needs. It is strongly suggested that an effective plan be developed to address this facility issue.

DOVER SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited: 1) Self Contained 2) Modified Regular 3) Resource Room

COMMENDATIONS:

- Dover Senior High School staff are dedicated, hardworking, solution oriented and enthusiastic. An effective and creative system for maintaining consistent communication between special and regular educators is well established.
- Students develop independent self-advocacy skills and are successful in mainstream situations. Peer support tutorial opportunities are effective.
- Parents were pleased with the communication with the special education team.
- Files are well maintained, current and organized.
- Extended School Year programming is consistently reviewed for students.

CITATIONS:

<u>Ed# 1107.02(a)</u>	2 files did not contain evidence of written disposition of referral.
<u>Ed# 1107.03(a)</u>	1 file: evaluation team did not meet multidisciplinary criteria.
<u>Ed# 1107.05</u>	1 file lacked signed permission to test. 1 file contained extension that was signed after 45 day time limit had expired.
<u>Ed# 1107.07</u>	1 file: no evidence that teacher of suspected disability at SEE/PT meeting.
<u>Ed# 1109.01(a,e,k)</u>	1 file: IEP did not contain present level of educational performance, vocational educational component or statement of financial responsibility.
<u>Ed# 1109.03</u>	1 file: did not contain evidence to determine appropriateness of team membership.
<u>Ed# 1113.01</u>	1 file: no evidence that vocational assessment was completed.
<u>Ed# 1123.04</u>	4 files did not contain access sheets.
<u>Ed# 1125.04(a)</u>	1 file did not contain evidence of written consent to evaluate.

SUGGESTIONS:

- File cabinets are not appropriately secured. It is suggested that they are either repaired or replaced with secured cabinets.

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

SAU # 11

Student File Review

Case Study Document

Reimbursement Claim Form

Case Study Addendum Form

ADDENDUM
JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

SAU # 11

CITATIONS:

<u>Ed#1107.02(d):</u>	2 files: Written notice of disposition of referral to special education evaluation team was missing.
<u>Ed#1107.05 (k):</u>	2 files: Evaluation was not completed within 45 days. In 1 file the evaluation was completed within the new time frame of the extension. In 1 file an extension was obtained but the evaluation was not completed within the new time frame.
<u>Ed#1107.07(c):</u>	1 file: The LEA representative is not identified .
<u>Ed#1109.01(b):</u>	1 file: The IEP did not include annual goals and short term instructional objectives.
<u>Ed.#1109.01(a):</u>	1 file : The IEP did not include present levels of academic performance.
<u>Ed#1109.01(I):</u>	1 file : The IEP did not include appropriate objective evaluation criteria, procedures and schedules.
<u>Ed#1109.01(k)</u>	1 file: The IEP did not include a statement of parties assuming financial responsibility.
<u>Ed#1109.04:</u>	2files: The IEP did not include evidence of parental notice and participation.
<u>Ed#1109.03</u>	1 file: The IEP did not show signatures of appropriate individuals.
<u>Ed #1111.01 (e)</u>	1 file: Extended School Year was not documented as having been considered by April 30th or 60 days prior to starting.
<u>34 CFR 300.307:</u>	2 files: lacked evidence that the students participate in regular physical education program.

SUGGESTIONS:

- It is suggested that the District more carefully monitor all aspects of process and procedures relating to students placed out of district.
- Documentation of attempts to notify and include parents in the process should be evident.